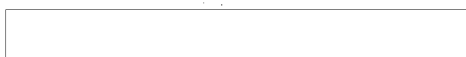


The President's Daily Brief

15 September 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

15 September 1972

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS



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Soviet agricultural problems are likely to be discussed at the party Central Committee plenum tomorrow, with Brezhnev said to be bouyant about prospects for a good harvest in the Virgin Lands.
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South Vietnamese Marines have repulsed several counterattacks around the Quang Tri citadel. (Page 3)



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Laotian Government forces are again moving slowly toward targets on the periphery of the Plaine des Jarres. (Page 6)

Chilean political tensions still simmer as President Allende tries to lure the Christian Democrats into a truce. (Page 7)



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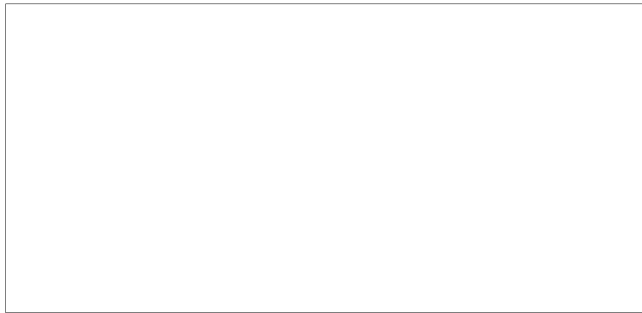
CHINA



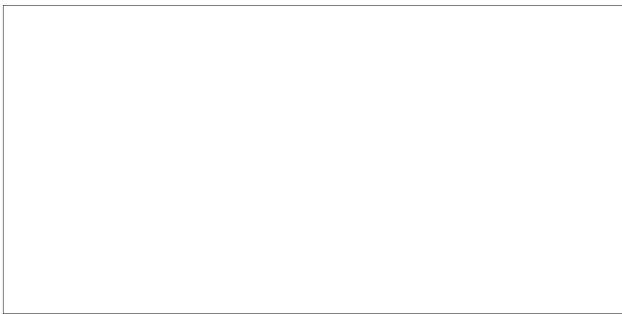
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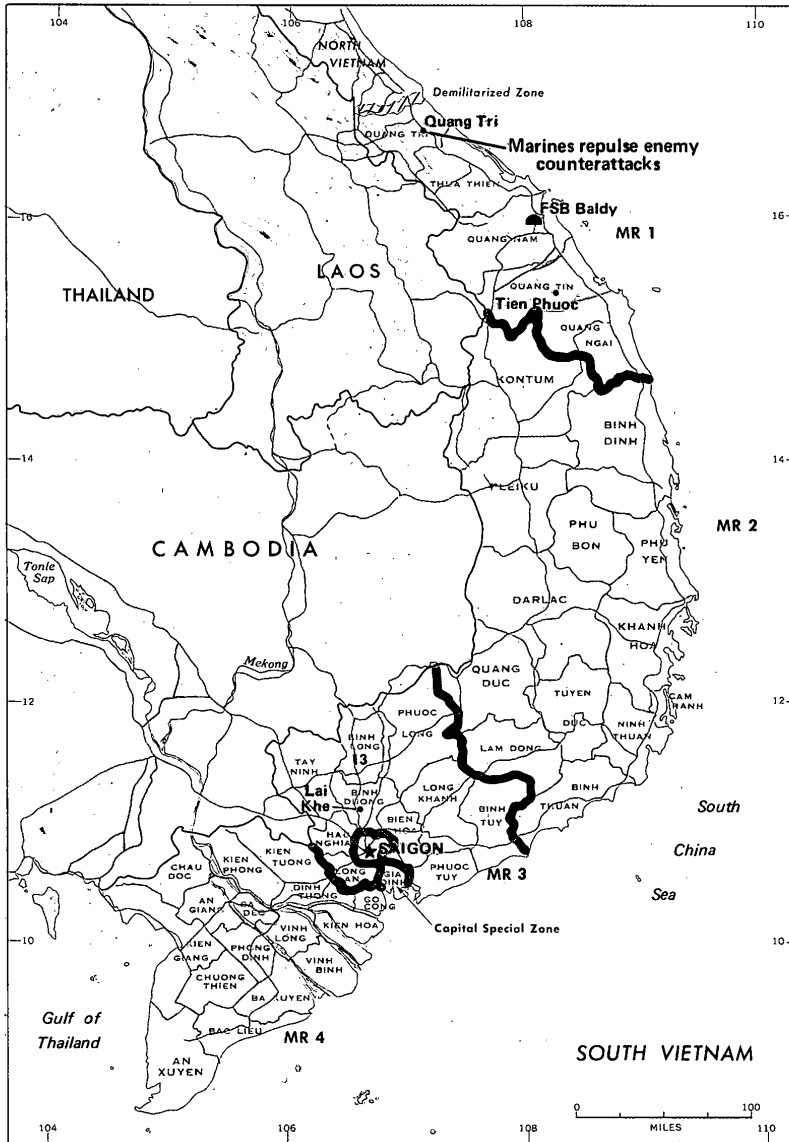
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USSR

Agricultural problems are likely to be discussed at the party Central Committee plenum scheduled to be held tomorrow.

According to an aide to party chief Brezhnev, the Soviet leader was in "rather buoyant spirits" following his return last week from touring key grain-growing areas of the Virgin Lands. The aide told an official of our embassy in Moscow that Brezhnev is convinced that his swing through the Virgin Lands has succeeded in promoting an all-out effort to bring in the harvest and help offset losses elsewhere. The party boss was said to have briefed the Politburo earlier this week on the prospects for a successful harvest in Soviet Central Asia and Siberia.

The embassy agricultural attaché is less sanguine over crop prospects in these areas. Weather conditions there have remained poor since Brezhnev's return, and harvesting losses may be high because of late ripening of the crops. In fact, not even a bumper crop will come close to offsetting the losses in other regions.



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VIETNAM

South Vietnamese Marines have turned back several enemy counterattacks around the Quang Tri citadel. Fighting has been heavy just south of the fortress and near the Thach Han River to the west, where government forces have occupied a major enemy transshipment point. Yesterday the Communists fired over 1,700 artillery and mortar rounds against the Marines.

Intercepts indicate that the government's campaign is hurting the Communists. One message noted that "we are very tired," and another stated that the South Vietnamese have engaged in "several good battles," a rare admission that things are not going well for the North Vietnamese.

Bad weather and allied mining of the rivers are hampering enemy efforts to move supplies into the city. The senior enemy authority for the northern battlefront has been asked to dispatch North Vietnamese naval and engineering personnel to help destroy mines in the inland waterways.

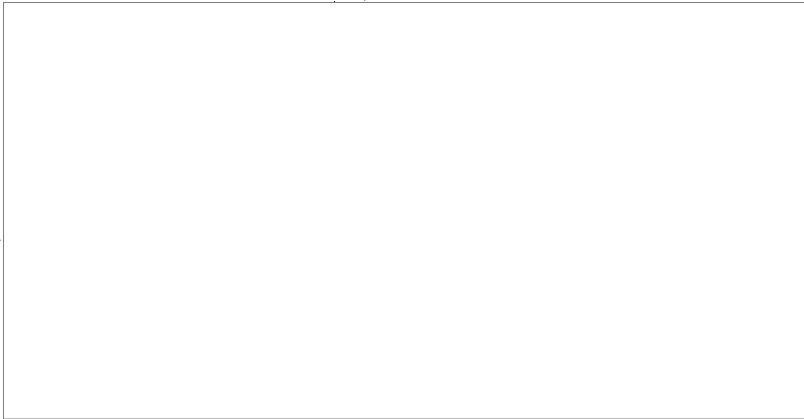
Farther south, sporadic fighting has been reported near Fire Support Base Baldy in Quang Nam Province and near Tien Phuoc District capital in Quang Tin Province. The North Vietnamese apparently have moved a joint armor and artillery regiment, equipped with 130-mm. guns and PT-76 tanks, into the Quang Tin coastal region.

This movement is another sign of the importance the Communists attach to increasing their presence in the lowlands. The recent increase in the fighting in nearby Quang Ngai Province, where a Communist buildup is continuing, also points to such intentions.

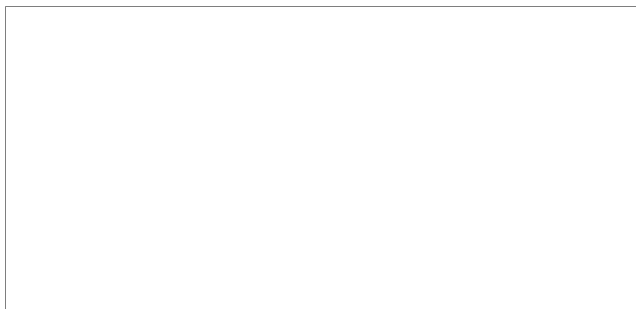
In the southern provinces, elements of the North Vietnamese 7th Division have been detected moving closer to the government's staging base for Route 13 operations at Lai Khe, north of Saigon. A flurry of enemy attacks in the lower delta has resulted in the loss of a significant number of outposts in Chuong Thien and An Xuyen provinces. These actions evidently were carried out to mask the further infiltration of Communist main force units into the western delta from nearby Cambodia.

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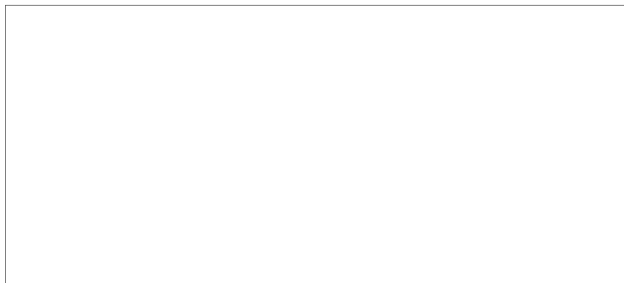
CAMBODIA



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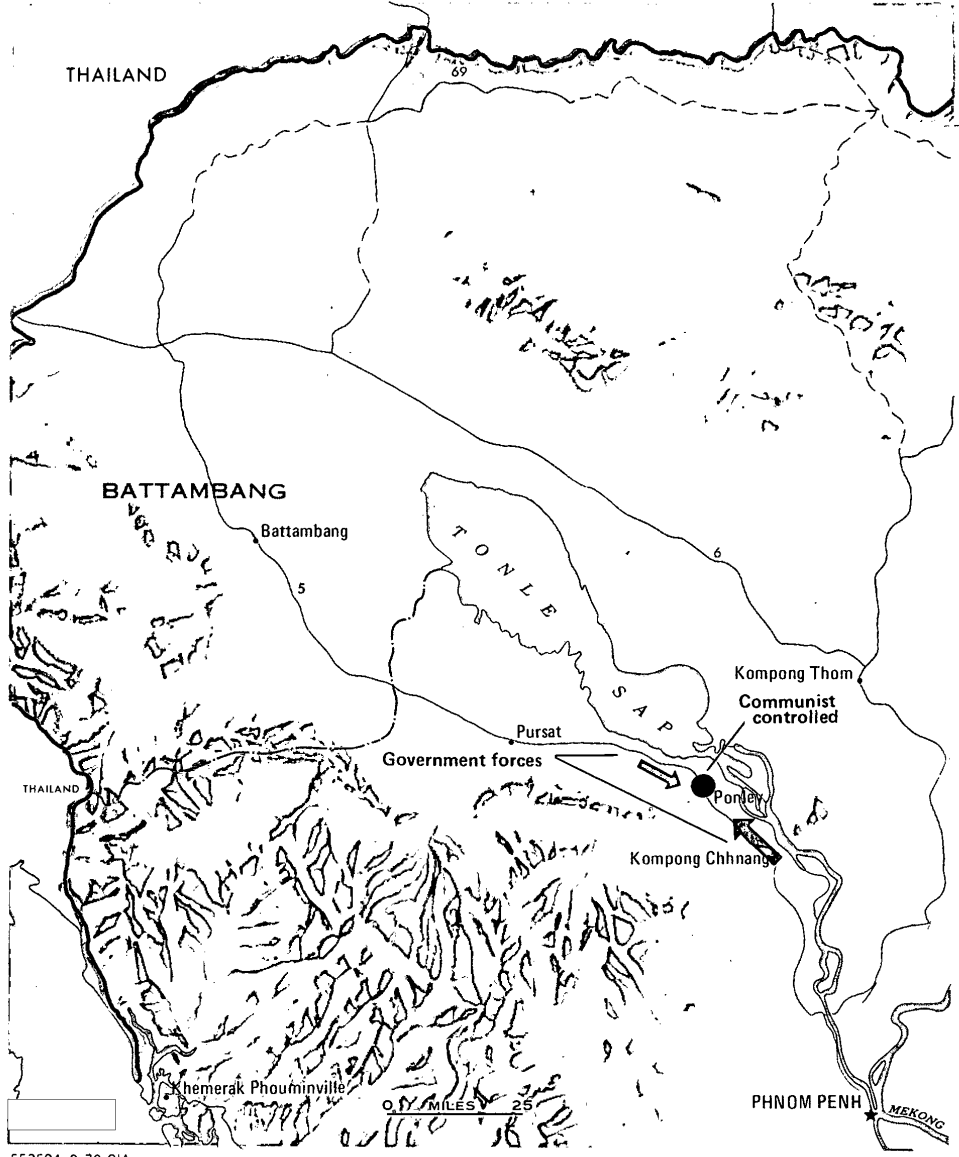
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Northwest Cambodia



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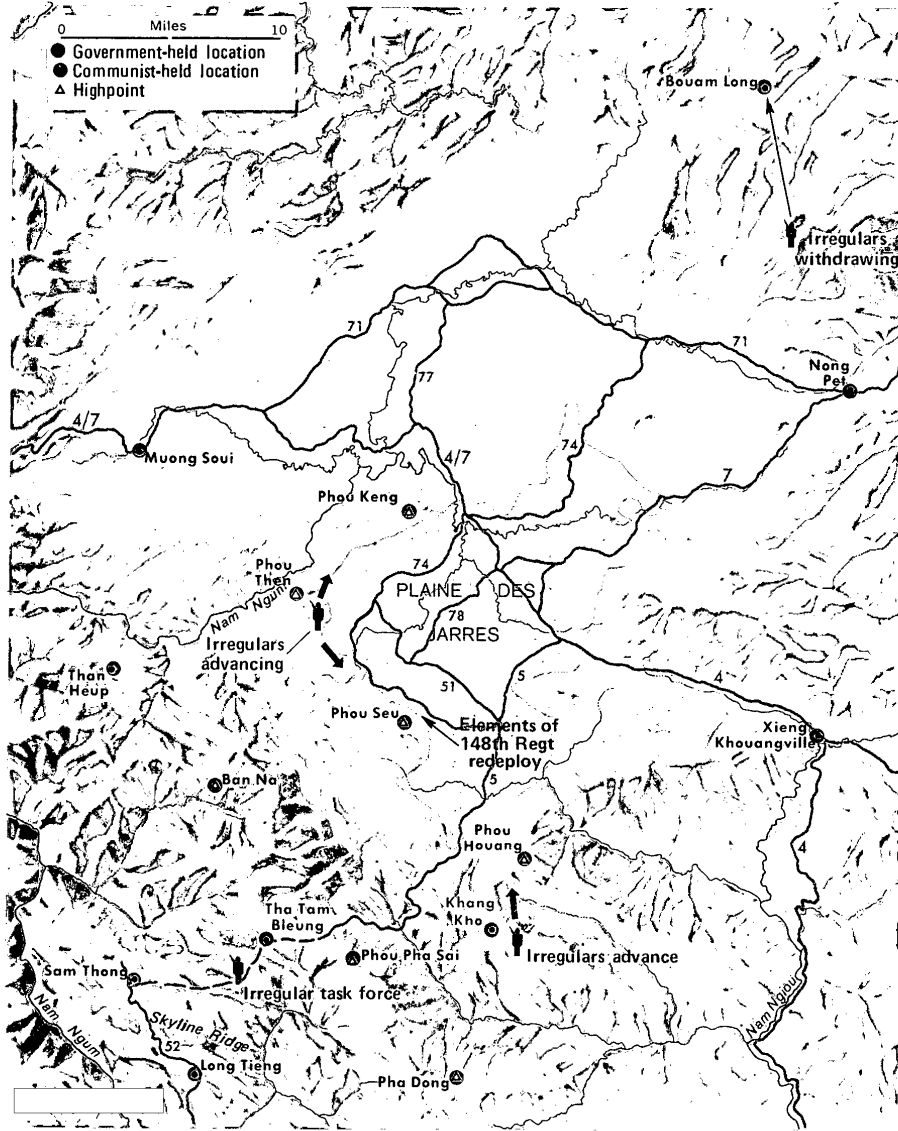
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The rice situation in Phnom Penh should improve markedly over the next several days. Almost 4,000 tons of rice from Thailand and South Vietnam are due to arrive this weekend by the Mekong River route. In addition, about three weeks' supply should arrive at Kompong Som port within the next two or three days to be trucked to Phnom Penh. Meanwhile, the depletion of Phnom Penh's rice stock has been slowed by daily airlifts of some 100 tons from Saigon and of 35 tons from Cambodia's Battambang Province.

Government forces trying to reopen Route 5 to Battambang are continuing their slow advance. The two government columns, now totaling about 19 battalions, are still meeting only light resistance from the estimated four battalions of Cambodian Communist troops in the Ponley area.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LAOS

Government forces are again moving slowly toward targets on the periphery of the Plaine des Jarres. Four fresh irregular battalions that arrived earlier this week on the western edge are advancing toward Phou Seu, a strategic height overlooking the southern Plaine, while another four-battalion force has set out for Phou Keng, a mountain on the northern edge. Three irregular battalions that had been stalled for the past five weeks near Khang Kho have also resumed their march toward the southern tip of the Plaine.

Intercepts indicate that the Communists have been preparing to blunt Vang Pao's renewed efforts. Elements of the 866th Regiment have been ordered to "annihilate" irregulars advancing from the west, and elements of the 148th Regiment have moved from the hills east of the Plaine to reinforce the 866th.

Vang Pao is still having problems with discipline and morale of some of his tribal irregulars. A task force assigned to attack Communist supply lines north of the Plaine has ignored orders and retreated to Bouam Long, its starting point, after several days of skirmishing with Communist forces.

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CHILE

Political tensions are still simmering, although no new street violence has occurred this week. News media across the political spectrum are speculating that some sort of power play by the military is in the offing.

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President Allende

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[REDACTED], is still trying to lure the Christian Democrats into a truce. For their part, the Christian Democrats fear the continuing unrest might preclude the congressional elections they expect to win in March, and they have not closed the door on Allende's overtures. Opposition parties suspended the joint march they had scheduled for yesterday, ostensibly because city officials authorized an undesirable site for the demonstration. Actually, the Christian Democrats were relieved. There was little enthusiasm for the march in the party's rank and file, and the turnout would not have matched the one Allende got last week.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

NOTE

European Communities: The groundwork has been laid for modest advances toward monetary union at the EC summit meeting scheduled for next month in Paris. The foreign and finance ministers of the ten present and prospective EC members have now agreed to establish a European Monetary Cooperation Fund. Initially the fund will provide short-term credit to alleviate members' temporary financial difficulties. It will exclude the longer term credits that Bonn fears could aggravate inflation. Suggested steps toward political integration have been shelved, and it appears that the summit will avoid provocative positions on EC relations with the US and USSR or on international monetary problems.

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